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SUBJECT: Austria Coming, Singapore Expanding, Cuban CG in Shanghai to Be New Consul General in Guangzhou

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GUANGZHOU 00016394 001.2 OF 002

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Austria is the newest European Union country looking to open a Consulate General in Guangzhou in the fall. Meanwhile, Singapore, which currently has a Consulate General in Xiamen in Fujian Province, intends to open a separate Consulate General in Guangzhou this summer, because of the large numbers of Singaporeans engaged in a multiplicity of enterprises in the Pearl River Delta. British colleagues tell us that the Cuban Consul General in Shanghai is being transferred to Guangzhou where she will open a new Consulate General probably in September. This will bring the number of Consulates General to 26, with Peru, Argentina, and Chile probably still in the pipeline perhaps to be joined by Hungary not to mention the on-again, off-again Russians. End Summary.

Austria Coming

¶2. (SBU) The German Consul General in Guangzhou has told Consular Corps colleagues that Austria will likely establish a Consulate General in autumn of this year. A chief focus will be on commercial matters, albeit a chief consideration on the part of the local Foreign Affairs Offices will be on having another European Consulate capable of issuing business visas. Spain is the most conspicuously absent European consulate representative, given the large commercial interests of Spanish companies in south China, but European colleagues note that Hungary has been exploring the possibility of establishing a Consulate while the Russians remain an on-again, off-again proposition.

Singapore Expanding

¶3. (SBU) Separately the Singapore Consul General in Xiamen in Fujian Province told colleagues that the island nation

will establish a separate Consulate General in Guangzhou. The staffing is currently being decided, and it is likely that the new post will be formally established in early July. The Xiamen Consulate General was established because of Fujian Province is the "home area" of the majority of the ethnic Chinese in Singapore with a Vice Consul heading a branch office in Guangzhou. The increasing numbers of Singaporean business people and their families residing in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and other major commercial centers in the Greater Pearl River Delta is the driver for the establishment of the new Consulate General.

Cuba Coming On Strong

¶4. (SBU) The British Consul General has also learned from his counterpart in Shanghai that the Cuban Consul General there, Tania Velazquez, has indicated that she will soon be assigned to Guangzhou, where she will establish a new Cuban Consulate General, probably in September. She apparently has been in Shanghai for only eight months. Since the opening of their Consulate (reftel), the Mexicans have maintained a low profile, perhaps because the post is headed by a Consul rather than a Consul General. In this context, there is some likelihood that the Cubans will be more aggressive in establishing themselves as the leading Latin American diplomatic force in Guangdong, particularly if Peru, Argentina, and Chile do not move forward more quickly with their plans.

Comment

¶5. (SBU) The twenty-three Consuls General currently in Guangzhou have remarked among themselves that this is just large enough a number for there to be a fairly active Consulate community while small enough for considerable familiarity with one another throughout the Corps. Adding

GUANGZHOU 00016394 002.2 OF 002

three more Consulates General should not in of itself alter that environment, but the addition of the Cubans does portend potentially awkward, even unpleasant, situations.

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